

THE VALUE OF MEMBERSHIP

BY YVETTE TAVARES

With the New Year upon us, it's a great time to look ahead to the things we'd like to accomplish in 2019. Having joined the CRA as Membership Director just two short months ago, I am excited not only to bring greater value to our new and existing members, but also to increase our member engagement.

As the only restaurant trade association in Connecticut, we serve as the voice of the industry. Given the current economic situation here in Connecticut, as well as legislative policy changes facing restaurant business owners, there has never been a greater need to have our voices heard. Recognizing the power in numbers, we continue working hard to increase our member base throughout the state.

As we continue to grow, we wanted to bring a simpler membership structure with a dues model that allows us to bring greater value to all our restaurant members. Following the lead of other states, we will be rolling out our new membership dues structure with fees based on the number of locations (rather than gross annual sales) and a fixed annual renewal date. The new structure goes into effect on February 1. Our focus is on delivering value in membership, whether for a longtime member or a new restaurant location just thinking about joining. Here's how the Connecticut Restaurant Association works on behalf of our members.

We work to keep members informed. As advocates to the industry, the CRA works year-round to influence legislative policies that affect the restaurant business. During legislative session, our members receive weekly legislative

updates, including opportunities for restaurant professionals to take action and have their voices heard. We also offer a monthly eNewsletter with timely information, news and stories relevant to the industry. To sign up for our monthly eNewsletter, please visit ctrestaurant.org/enewsletter.html.

We work to bring members value. The CRA partners with businesses providing products and services to the restaurant industry. Our CRA members benefit from discounts from several of these providers, from insurance to utilities to products you use in your business every day. For 2019, we have also increased our number of ServSafe® certification courses, available across the state at a discounted rate to our CRA members. For more information on our ServSafe courses, please email us at servsafe@ctrestaurant.org.

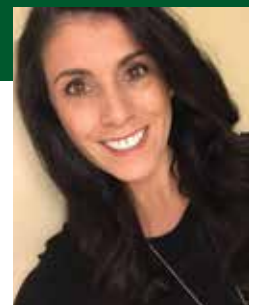
We work to build relationships. Last month's issue of the *Beverage Journal* offered highlights from our 2018 Awards Gala, The CRAzies. A theme we saw repeated throughout the night were stories of relationships critical to the growth and learning of our talented winners. The CRA provides opportunities to build and develop relationships with networking events offered throughout the year, including our Annual Golf Classic, our Annual Awards Gala and other special events. Follow us on Facebook for notifications about upcoming events or visit our Events Calendar on our website at ctrestaurant.org.

We work to build future leaders. The Connecticut Hospitality Educational Foundation (CHEF) helps to cultivate

the next generation of restaurant and foodservice leaders through programs like ProStart®, a two-year culinary and management program for high school students. The CRA works to support the implementation of this program in Connecticut and helps to generate funds through sponsorships, scholarships, member donations and special events such as Connecticut Restaurant Week. Connecticut currently has 14 participating high schools and more than 1,000 students enrolled in the program, some of whom will compete at the 2019 ProStart® Invitational on March 1 at Gateway Community College in New Haven. Our very own Wilbur Cross High School in New Haven took the top spot nationally at the 2018 Invitational. For more information on how to get your local high school involved, please email us at info@ctrestaurant.org.

LEARN MORE

From legislative support, to member savings, information and networking opportunities, the Connecticut Restaurant Association offers benefits and resources supporting restaurant businesses across the state. For information about membership, please email membership@ctrestaurant.org.



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